Foster Care

Federal-Provincial Working
Group on Child and Family
Services Information

September 1999

The purpose of this report is to summarize current foster care programs in all provinces*. The report is based on information provided by provincial officials.

The initial version of this report was produced in January 1992 and updated on an ad hoc basis as rates changed. In December 1995, the report was restructured to provide, in addition to the existing rate information, a more detailed description of the foster care system in each jurisdiction across Canada. The summaries cover the following features: types of foster care, training and approval procedures, the review/evaluation process, appeals/complaints, foster parent associations, damage compensation, foster care rates (including mechanisms for establishing rates, periodicity of changes, basic maintenance rate components and actual basic rates), additional allowable expenses, special rates, if any, and substitute care arrangements.

Federal Children's Special Allowances (CSA) are payable on behalf of all children under the age of 18 who are maintained by a child welfare agency, a government department or an institution authorized to be responsible for the care and custody of children. Payments are generally issued to the children in care. Prior to July 1998, the CSA was $85/child/month. With the implementation of the National Child Benefit (NCB) in July 1998, the amount was increased to $135.42/child/month. This amount was further increased to $150.42 effective July 1999.

Some provinces chose to pass on the increased amounts directly to child welfare authorities; others chose to allocate the funds to broader NCB reinvestment strategies to assist all low-income children.

* In all instances, the term "provinces" has been used to refer to both provinces and territories.

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Introduction

Foster care is used as a placement option for children who cannot live at home and for whom a relative placement is not available. Foster home licenses are approved by the District Manager under *The Child Welfare Act*; placements are made by social workers in the district offices. The Department funds foster homes through a per diem rate structure.

Types of Foster Care

Newfoundland has three types of foster care: regular foster homes, family-based treatment foster homes, and child specific homes.

Regular Foster Homes
Children in need of protection or children awaiting adoption may be placed in licensed regular foster homes. A maximum of two children in care are to be placed in one home, unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example, an emergency or a sibling group needing placement. A special rate is available for children who have special needs.

Family-Based Treatment Foster Homes
The Family-Based Treatment Program provides foster homes for a limited number of young people from 6 to 16 years of age who have severe emotional and behavioural problems. The role of the foster parents is to create a safe treatment-oriented family environment in which the child can learn to deal with his/her problems. The foster parents receive extensive training before and after a child is placed with them. The foster parents are also part of a team that designs and implements program plans for each child in the home. The team includes social workers, birth parents, behaviour management specialists, school representatives, and the child.

Child Specific Homes
Sometimes a family may wish to care for a specific child in care, where the birth parents are unable to care for the child. The family may not wish to be licensed as a regular foster home, but, if the Department is involved, the home must be certified by the District Manager under Section 34 of the *Child Welfare Act*. This involves a reference check, a home study, and completion of a certificate of conduct by the police. The certification is based on the social worker's resulting recommendation concerning the suitability of the home. A report on the home must then be submitted to the District Manager once a year. When the child leaves the home, the home is closed. If the family is interested in caring for another child in care, the home must be relicensed.

Training and Approval

The home study is an important part of the application package. It provides information on the applicants' employment history, income, personalities, health, marital relationship, relationship with their children, motivation to foster a child, attitudes towards education, religion, and community standing. Other factors include attitudes of any other children in the home toward fostering, a description of the home and neighbourhood, and availability of support services. The worker discusses any preferences or expectations the applicants have concerning the age, sex or

developmental level of children placed in their home. A criminal records check is also part of the assessment.

An application for fostering, the supporting documentation, plus the worker's recommendation, are submitted to the District Manager for consideration. A foster home agreement is signed by the worker and foster parents each time a home is approved. An approved home is licensed as a regular or child specific foster home; the licence states the maximum number of children that can be placed in a home. The District Manager may also reclassify, revoke, or refuse to issue a foster home license.

A non-mandatory training program is available to approved foster parents.

Review/Evaluation

An annual report on every foster home and home licensed under Section 34 of the *Child Welfare Act* is to be submitted to the District Manager. The report includes a recommendation regarding continued use of the home.

Appeals/Complaints

Anyone who is not satisfied with the services provided by the Department of Social Services, may appeal. A decision made by a worker may initially be appealed to the District Manager. Where the situation is not resolved, a Service Review Committee composed of officers of the Department, will review the decision following a written request. The next appeal is made, through written notification, to the Social Services Appeal Board whose members are not employees of the provincial government. Finally, if not resolved through these avenues, the matter may be taken to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
Allegations of abuse or neglect must be investigated immediately by a district office other than the one responsible for the regular supervision of the home. Physical or sexual abuse complaints must be referred to the police for investigation of possible criminal charges. Investigations are carried out jointly by the police and the Department.

Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association

The Newfoundland and Labrador Foster Families Association was established in 1982 to support foster parents. A liaison committee made up of Association members and departmental staff, meets on a regular basis to work on issues affecting the quality of care provided to children in care. The Association works with the Department in providing training to foster parents and has assisted in the development of the foster parent handbook. The Department of Social Services funds the Association.

Damage Compensation

Foster parents are not required to have liability insurance. When a child in care accidentally or wilfully damages property, the child is expected to try to make amends through appropriate methods such as earning extra money to cover the cost of repairs.

Payment of damages up to $2,400 per child per incident may be approved by the Regional Manager. Amounts in excess of $2,400 must be approved by the Director of Child Welfare on the recommendation of the Regional Manager.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Generally, foster care rates are set by regulation. Foster care services are managed by district offices; however, monthly maintenance payments are made by the provincial office.

In addition to the foster care program, the Department of Social Services also provides financial assistance to persons caring for the child of a relative, where the child is **not** a ward of the Department. This program, the Regular Child Welfare Allowance, is described following the information on foster care rates below.

Basic Maintenance Rates
The basic maintenance rate is paid to regular foster homes, family-based treatment foster homes and child specific homes. It is based on the age of the child and is to cover food, housing, laundry/dry cleaning, personal items and additional care costs.

Basic Maintenance Rates
(effective April 1, 1993)

	0-11 years		*12 and over*	
	Monthly	*Per Diem*	*Monthly*	*Per Diem*
Basic Care Costs	335.10	11.17	387.90	12.93
Additional Care Costs	117.00	3.90	117.00	4.48
Total Basic Maintenance Rate	**$ 452.10**	**$ 15.07**	**$ 504.90**	**$ 17.41**

Additional Allowable Expenses
The Department of Social Services may provide additional amounts to cover emergency and initial placement costs. Additional funds may be provided for school supplies, recreation, travel and other needs.

Special Rate Provisions
Upon placing a child in foster care, the social worker approves the basic maintenance rate. After a 30 day period, if deemed necessary, a thorough analysis of the child's needs is completed to determine if additional assistance is required. This will be done in consultation with the foster

parent(s) via the Special Needs Assessment Form. The Special Needs Assessment Rate is paid over and above the basic rate.

The assessment identifies 12 key areas of possible need for a child in care. The amount of monies to be paid on behalf of the child with special needs is determined by the completion of the Special Needs Assessment Form. The form is to be completed jointly by the social worker and the foster parents. Other professionals involved with the child may be invited to participate and/or provide any documentation as required.
Special Needs Rates will be reviewed at least every six months and adjusted accordingly at the time of the review. All rates may be reviewed at shorter intervals if it can be demonstrated that there has been a change in the child's needs. The foster parent or social worker may initiate such a review.

Reviews may indicate that a reduction is required in the payment and/or services as the child's needs have changed. Payments and services must be adjusted to reflect the assessed need. The basic rate paid to the foster family will not change. Any reduction in the special needs rate as determined through the assessment, will become effective on the first of the following month.

On the last page of the form there is a section - ISSUES IDENTIFIED TO BE EXPLORED FURTHER IN THE CASE PLAN. The social worker and foster parent are encouraged to document any issues that either would like to see addressed or explored as part of the case plan for the child. This facilitates future planning and goal setting for the child.

The twelve key areas identified are: eating, personal care, socialization, communication, health, behaviour management, developmental, sexuality, life skills, school/education, emotional/ psychiatric/psychological, and family involvement.

Medical documentation is required for the following key areas to support an increase in the rate or to maintain an increased rate: 1) eating; 2) communication; 3) health; and 4) emotional/ psychiatric/psychological. The social worker is responsible for obtaining the required documentation. Any required documentation must be attached to the Special Needs Assessment and retained in the child's file.

Regular Child Welfare Allowance
When a child is at risk in his/her own family, the Department may explore the possibility of placing the child with relatives, as an alternative to bringing the child into care. In such a case, the parent(s), the relative and the Department agree to the placement, the parents retain guardianship and the child does not become a ward of the Department. Under this arrangement, a "Regular Child Welfare Allowance" may be paid to the relatives caring for the child when a financial eligibility test determines that the child's parents cannot provide the necessary financial support. It is not necessary for the relative caring for the child to demonstrate financial need. The allowance is not payable under a Voluntary Care Agreement (or other legal arrangement making the child a ward) but may be payable under a Supervision Order.

The allowance may be terminated if the child is working full time, or reduced if other benefits are received on behalf of the child (for example, Canada Pension Plan or Worker's Compensation benefits). The child may qualify for assistance with the cost of school books, eye glasses, dental care, prescribed drugs, special footwear or braces provided by the Department of Health, transportation for medical purposes and transportation to return the child to the permanent custody of the parents, if the parents cannot cover the transportation cost. A social worker can increase the allowance paid up to a maximum foster care rate of $1,038.00 per month, based upon a Special Needs Assessment.

The person caring for the child, and receiving the Regular Child Welfare Allowance, may be eligible for the federal Child Tax Benefit.

Regular Child Welfare Allowance Rates[1]

(effective November 1, 1992)

Age	*Monthly Rate*
0-5 years	$121.00
6-12 years	148.00
Over 12 years	178.00

1. The person receiving the Regular Child Welfare Allowance may be eligible for the federal Child Tax Benefit on behalf of the child.

Substitute Care Arrangements

There are a small number of Board operated group homes, two emergency placement facilities for children 12-16 years of age and one facility for children 0-11 years of age who are in care. These have a total placement capacity of 40 children, the majority being between 12 and 16 years of age. All receive their funding from the Department of Social Services.

There are no institutional facilities in Newfoundland for children in care. Out-of-province facilities are used when necessary, provided space is available. Assistance in preparation for independent living is available to wards over the age of 16 who have entered into a Youth Care Agreement with the Director of Child Welfare.

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Introduction

In this province children and youth are cared for "away from their families" in either family foster care homes or adolescent group homes. A Provincial Foster Care Committee is responsible to formulate and recommend provincial policies and standards with participation from regional "Resource" staff, Foster Parent representatives, and Central Office leadership. A provincial Foster Parent Program is in place within the provincial framework of 5 Regional Health Authorities which control budget allocation and day to day program duties in their regions.

Types of Foster Care

Foster Carers are categorized into the following groupings:

1. ***"Active"*** Foster Carers: those who care for children/youth in temporary or "short term" care.
2. ***"Permanent"*** Foster Carers: those who have care plans for children/youth for 18 months or longer.
3. Combination ***"Active/Permanent"*** Foster Carers: homes which combine both types of foster care.
4. ***"Group"*** Foster Care: caregivers who care for 3 or more children/youth in their homes.
5. ***"Relative"*** or ***"Kinship"*** Foster Carers: these are caregivers who have been part of the child/youth's natural network who contract to provide care on either a "short-term" or "permanent" basis. These caregivers are not processed in the same fashion as other caregivers when they enter the program.

Foster Care Classification Levels

Every ***"Active"*** or ***"Permanent"*** foster home is assigned a Classification Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3. The classification levels have been introduced to the foster care program as one method to identify and recognize the different skill levels of caregivers and to aid in making appropriate matches for placement of children and youth in the province. The Level determination is in part determined by the "skill rating score" which caregivers achieve with the "Classification Level Assessment Tool". Other factors involved in the assignment of Classification Level are a) the Regional Needs and Budget flexibility, as well as b) the level of intensity of care the caregivers are willing to provide.

Specialized Foster Care

Some families focus their services by specializing with different ages of children or in more specialized service such as:

Respite Homes
PAIR Homes (Parent and Infant Resource)
Emergency Care (Care for up to 30 days)
Families Helping Families (Caregiver works intensively with both the child/youth and the natural family)
Supervised Apartment (Caregiver supervises older youth or young mother in semi-independent living arrangement as transition into independent living).

Provincial LAP Program

A provincial therapeutic program for children 12 years and younger is operated in Charlottetown and is open to eligible children anywhere in the province. This program is designed to assist families with children who are displaying severe emotional or behaviour problems. There are 5 families in this program. The program provides foster care for the children, counselling (individual, family, and group) for the parents while the child is in care, and follow-up services after the child returns to the natural home or another foster family.

Children are placed in this program for up to two years, and includes up to two years of follow-up support. A full-time coordinator runs the program and provides support and guidance to the foster parents and arranges additional activities/services required for the children. Group work is done with foster families, natural families, and the children in the program.

Training and Approval

This role is performed by Regional Resource Staff in each of the 5 Health Regions of the Province.

The application process for foster carers begins with a **"Foster Parent Information"** session for a group of potential applicants or interested parties. At that session the combined **"Self-Assessment Questionnaire and Application Form"** is given to those who have an interest in making a formal application to become caregivers in the region.

The **"Self-Assessment Questionnaire"** provides the non-negotiable criteria related to applicants. If the applicant(s) pass this screening the Child Protection Registry is checked. At this point, if there is no reason to refuse the application, a primary worker will be assigned to complete a **Foster Parent Intake Assessment** (This also includes a determination if the applicants meet the Housing and Safety Standards of the Province for Fostering) and if positive, and the applicants wish to proceed, they would proceed to the stage at which the **Family Assessment** and **"Preparation for Fostering"** group training is done. Criminal Record Checks, references, medicals and other professional reports are requested (when appropriate) at this stage.

If the applicants are given "Probationary" approval they are ready for their first placement and a "Buddy" (an experienced foster carer) is selected for them and contracted for a basic number of hours support during that first placement. This provides additional support to that provided by the office staff.

After 3 months placement, or the end of that first placement, if that is earlier, the placement experience is evaluated. Depending upon the evaluation the options would be: recommendation to be a registered approved family; extension of probationary.

The "Preparation for Fostering" training is often done by a Resource Social Worker and an experienced foster carer. The training involves 6-8 two hour sessions. This ideally should be done prior to the first placement in the family with 8-12 new foster parents.

Foster Carers are encouraged to attend any training sessions and workshops which would enhance their skills. The expectation is that all Active and Permanent Caregivers receive a minimum of 10 hours formal training each year.

Review/Evaluation

Each foster carer is assigned a "Home" Worker, who is responsible to support the foster home and be the ongoing connection with each home. Each child placed in a foster home has an assigned "Child Welfare" Social Worker, whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the child's needs are being met and that the case plan for this child is being followed. In most cases this worker is also the direct worker for the natural family. In homes with permanent placements the home worker and the child's worker may be the same person.

At the conclusion of each placement a *"Post Placement Evaluation"* is expected to be completed. In this review session the foster carer, home worker and child worker review the placement and note achievements and any difficulties which arose during the placement. It is recorded if issues were resolved to the satisfaction of all parties and if further training or development is required in future placements for any of the "team" members involved. This assessment form is signed by all three parties and a copy is placed in the child's and foster carer's files.

In most regions of the province foster carers are assigned to a "Cluster Group" in their region for ongoing support and development. These groups of foster carers meet either bi-weekly or monthly and are facilitated by either an experienced caregiver or a Resource social worker.

Appeals/Complaints

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect in a Foster Home Resource
The province has a policy which states that all allegations are to be immediately reported to a supervisor and given immediate priority for investigation. Detailed steps are outlined which emphasizes prompt and thorough steps in an attempt to make every assurance to the protection of both the child/youth and the foster carer. Procedures outlined are intended to ensure objectivity in the assessment and to involve senior administrative personnel in the process.

Foster Carers under investigation will be notified that an investigation is underway as soon as the decision is made that a formal investigation is warranted. For the caregivers support and information a referral will be made to the FAST team (Foster Parents Support Team under the authority of the Provincial Federation of Foster Families).

Federation of Foster Families/Foster Parents Associations

In each of the 5 regions of the province there are local Associations of Foster Families. Most regions hold monthly meetings. The Provincial Federation of Foster Families provides an Insurance Rider for Foster Carers with membership in their association. Membership is compulsory for all provincial foster carers to ensure this insurance coverage. The Provincial Federation also provides for 2 major training sessions each year for foster carers with their Spring Annual Symposium and their Fall General Annual Meeting. They also invite regional child welfare staff to these sessions.

Foster Care Rates

Monthly Level Payments are paid to caregivers according to the Level (see section on "Foster Care Classification Levels" for description of levels) they have been assigned in their region:

Level 1: $200 per month per family
Level 2: $600 per month per family
Level 3: $1000 per month per family

A "second bed fee" is also paid to these homes when a second placement is made in the home. These rates are: Level 1:$100, Level 2:$200 and Level 3:$300 per month. There are no additional payments related to Level for additional placements in the home.

Individual Contracts with Caregivers are done annually and payments made on a monthly basis to "Active" homes, whether or not there is a placement in the home. If caregivers are unable to fulfil the conditions of the contract level payments, they could be adjusted down, or terminated in some cases.

Foster Carers have the right to appeal decision on their Classification Levels to the Foster Care Appeal Board.

Children and Youth in Temporary or "Short" Term Care
After 30 days in a placement a "Child Care Category Assessment Form" is completed. Using a point system all "Active" children are categorized into either Child Care Categories 1, 2, or 3. Child Care payments to caregivers are based upon 2 age groupings as well as Category level:

Direct Child Related Payments
(effective July 1996)

Level	*Children 0-11 years (per month)*	*Youth 12 years and older (per month)*
Care 1	$400	$560
Care 2	$700	$850
Care 3	$900	$1050

These rates cover the direct child care costs for room and board, monthly clothing allowances, and routine travel expenses. Infants on formula are allowed the extra cost of formula in addition to the established rates. All children in care are eligible for dental, medical, optical and prescription coverage.

Children and Youth in Permanent Care Arrangements
When children or youth have a case plan which includes living in the same home for 18 months or more they are considered to be in Long Term or Permanent Care. The direct child care financial rates to caregivers are determined by a monthly Care Level 1 rate plus the amount which has been determined by points achieved using the *"Historical Risk Assessment Form"*. The maximum paid is $500/month.

Additional Allowable Expenses
An initial clothing allowance may be provided, based on need, when the child comes into care or when a child/youth has extraordinary clothing needs. "Extraordinary" travel costs are also allowed on a case by case basis. Some special needs costs (eg. recreational, educational, private counselling, etc.) are also covered when considered vital to the child's/youth's case plans.

Respite Care
All caregivers are eligible for 24 days respite a year. Respite providers are ordinarily other approved caregivers, but in some situations non-foster parents are approved after screening (Criminal Record Check and Child Protection Registry screening) and meeting other eligibility requirements. Respite Rates are determined by Category Rating of the child or youth: Category I: $25; Category 2: $35; and Category 3: $45 per 24 hour day.

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Introduction

Foster homes are the most commonly used alternative form of care for children removed from their homes. The Department of Community Services provides overall policy and guidelines for the operation of the foster care program. Foster care services are delivered by agencies (either district offices of the Department or child and family service agencies). Orientation and Basic Mandatory Core Training for foster parents is provided by the agencies/district offices in collaboration with the Federation of Foster Family Associations of Nova Scotia. Currently, the foster care system is moving toward the P.R.I.D.E. model of competency based foster care.

Types of Foster Care

There are three types of foster care in Nova Scotia; foster homes, parent counsellor homes and restricted homes.

Foster Home
Foster parents who have been approved by the agencies and successfully completed Orientation and Basic Mandatory Core Training Program.

Parent Counsellor
Foster parents with specialized training and support program to provide care for children with a high level of special needs.

Restricted Foster Homes
Families who are friends or relatives of the child in care and have been approved specifically for that child.

Training and Approval

Once a person applies to foster, they are required to complete the Orientation Program and the Mandatory Basic Core Training Program which provides them with information on fostering and core training on effective parenting, non-violent crisis intervention and cultural sensitivity. A home study is completed by the agency/district office to determine whether or not a family is suitable to become foster parents which covers such areas as; health of applicants, financial management, problem solving ability, references attitudes/practices towards discipline, and parenting ability.

Review/Evaluation

The foster home is reviewed 6 months after approval and annually thereafter. The review includes, adjustment to fostering, any changes in the home, any problems experienced and recommendations.

Appeals/Complaints

Complaints by parents, foster parents, or children who are dissatisfied with a service or decision are encouraged to follow the agency/district office appeal policy in the complainant's jurisdiction.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
The protocol for the Investigation of Allegations of Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care covers the policy and procedures in these matters. Investigations are conducted by an agency other than the home agency to avoid a conflict of interest. The Federation of Foster Family Associations of Nova Scotia provides an Allegation Support Program for foster parents.

Federation of Foster Family Associations of Nova Scotia

The Federation is an organization for foster families run by foster parents to support one another as caregivers. This organization represents approximately 650 approved foster parents in the province. Through the work of the Federation office staff, executive and province-wide Associations, the Federation promotes quality foster care via advocacy, education, information sharing, policy recommendations and maintaining the lines of communication between foster families, agencies and government. Contact the Federation at (902) 424-3071 or fax: (902-424-5199).

Insurance Program for Foster Parents

This program provides coverage for extended property damage, comprehensive general liability and defence costs. It is funded by the Department of Community Services and purchased by the Federation of Foster Family Associations of Nova Scotia.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Rates are reviewed by the Department of Community Services after consultations with agencies and the Federation of Foster Family Associations of Nova Scotia, and following approval by the Minister.

Maintenance Expenditures for Children in Care
Maintenance Expenditures for Children in Care include board rates, clothing rates, spending/school/Christmas allowances and other payments for services or items to meet the needs of children in care such as counselling, tutoring, recreation, and dental care.

Foster Care Rates

(effective December 1, 1998)

Board Rates	
Age	***Per Diem***
0-9 years	$13.24
10+ years	19.25

Clothing Allowance	
Age	***Three times per year***
0-4 years	$157.00
5-9 years	259.00
10+ years	362.00

Spending Allowance (Effective March 1, 1999)	
Age	***Monthly***
0-5 years	$10.00
6-11 years	$15.00
12-15 years	$25.00 paid to child
16+ years	$40.00 paid to child

School Supplies (Effective March 1, 1999)	
Age	***Annually***
5-9 years	$ 70.00
10-20 years	120.00

Christmas Allowance (Effective March 1, 1999)	
Age	***Annually***
0-5 years	$100.00
6-10 years	145.00 ($125 for caregiver to buy child's gift, $20 for child to buy gifts)
11-12 years	190.00 ($150 to caregiver to buy child's gift and $40 for child to buy gifts)

Additional Allowable Expenses

Additional funds may be provided with prior approval based on policy, to provide services or items needed by children in care such as therapy, youth alternative workers, tutoring, etc. Special per diem rates are also available to foster parents based on a point system guidelines of the extraordinary needs of the child.

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Introduction

Foster care is the preferred placement option for most children coming into care. Within each regional office, one or more social workers are designated with responsibility for the provision of foster care services in that region. Responsibilities include recruitment, assessment and approval of new applicants, selection of placements, training and other supports to foster parents, evaluations and annual reviews of foster homes, ensuring any complaints/grievances are investigated and liaison with the local Foster Families Association.

Types of Foster Care

In New Brunswick, there are two types of foster homes approved by the Department of Health and Community Services: regular foster homes, approved for the placement of one or more children in care (including emergency placement homes); and provisional foster homes, used specifically for a designated child in care - usually a relative, friend or neighbour. Generally, a maximum of five children are permitted by policy in a regular foster home; however, in therapeutic and special needs homes, a maximum of two children are permitted. The total number of dependants within a foster home, including children in care, shall not exceed seven. Dependants include natural children of the foster parents under the age of 19, frail and elderly family members, and residents or clients placed through other programs. Exceptions must be approved by the Regional Director.

Foster homes can include "Therapeutic foster families" and "Young Offender foster families". "Therapeutic foster families" are career-oriented or professional foster families that are prepared to combine the innate skills of child caring with the challenge of developing a competency-based approach for systematically treating specific needs in children. "Young Offender foster families" are foster families who are able to accommodate youth who have come into conflict with the law and who have certain court ordered conditions regarding their care.

Training and Approval

Following receipt of an application, consultation with the references and a criminal record check, applicants are asked to undergo "Pre-Service Training" to help assess their suitability for fostering and to provide them with basic information on fostering. Applicants and their family members are then interviewed and a home assessment is conducted.

The decision on whether to approve the foster family must be made within four weeks of completion of the home assessment and within four months of receipt of the application and references. The approval also indicates whether the home is being considered for emergency placement, the maximum number of children to receive foster care services in that home and any stipulations or conditions relevant to that applicant's situation. Most homes are approved for one, two or three children.

As a final step in the screening process, the worker must obtain a health statement from the applicants or their physician, regarding general health, specific illnesses or disabilities and a record of immunization.

Upon approval of a foster home, a "Foster Family Resource Agreement" is signed between the parents and the social worker. The agreement outlines the roles of the foster parents and the Department. All foster parents are also given a manual on foster care and an ID card identifying them as foster parents and providing authorization for minor medical services for a foster child.

Once approved, any foster family can attend any training there is available at the regional level, although no attendance is mandatory, except for specialized (Therapeutic) families. Regional foster home co-ordinators are responsible for the co-ordination and sometimes the delivery of training.

Most of the training provided deals with child developmental and child management issues. Courses such as STEP-Teen and other courses on discipline are very much in demand. The N.B. Community College has developed the first three of what will eventually be a curriculum of 20 courses available to foster parents across the province.

Approval of a Provisional Foster Home

In the case of approving provisional homes, conditional approval may be granted and the child placed when the family expresses a desire to accept the child and the social worker visits the home. This visit assesses the health and safety aspects of the home, the child's desire to be placed there, relationships of the family with the child and with his parents and any other factors influencing the safety or development of the child.

The regional office must notify the family that the placement is conditional for 60 days pending full approval. The full approval process - as described above for regular foster homes - must be completed within two months of the placement.

Foster parents operating a provisional foster home are informed of pre-service and other training; however, compulsory attendance is at the discretion of the regions. Provisional foster parents are provided with a letter of authorization for minor medical services for the foster child, but not an ID card.

Review/Evaluation

Once the child has been placed, a social worker must contact the foster family, by phone, within three days, and visit the child within seven days of placement, within 30 days of the first visit and monthly thereafter, or in accordance with the plan for the child.

Most foster families are evaluated annually. Where a family is fostering a child on a long term basis who has bonded with the family, the family may be evaluated once every two years after the first two years of caring for the child.

Appeals/Complaints

Complaints or grievances from or against foster parents must be investigated within five working days. Foster parents discuss complaints directly with the regional foster care worker; if this is unsatisfactory the foster parent may take the matter to the worker's supervisor. If still dissatisfied, the foster parent may request, in writing, a meeting with the Regional Director or may then approach the local Foster Family Association to advocate on his behalf.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
When an allegation of abuse is made against a foster parent, he or she is investigated in accordance with the Department's abuse protocols, in force since 1987. In the case of sexual or serious physical abuse allegations, a joint investigation with the police is conducted. A neutral worker from the Department, including the possibility of staff from a neighbouring regional office, conducts the investigation. In addition, the foster home worker provides information on the process as it unfolds; keeps the foster family up to date on their status as a resource; and with their consent, may refer the family to a Foster Assistance and Support Team (F.A.S.T.) or arrange for other counselling services as necessary. If an allegation is proven false, the Department may provide reasonable reimbursement to the foster family for legal expenses, as well as provide or pay for critical incident stress debriefing.

Foster Families Association of New Brunswick

There is a provincial Association as well as local associations in each region of the province. Departmental Regional Offices encourage the development of and provide funding to the Association in their region. All foster parents automatically become members of the Association in their area and are encouraged to contact other members for mutual support. The Association is devoted to meeting the following objectives: to work for the betterment of the foster child; to promote fellowship among foster families; to provide a forum for training, an exchange of ideas and mutual support; to identify and attempt to resolve foster care issues in conjunction with the Department; and to advocate on behalf of foster parents.

Damage Compensation

The Department will consider any request by a foster parent for reimbursement for damage, loss or injury to the foster parent or a third party where the damage was caused by the child in care. Such incidents must be reported immediately to the social worker. If the foster parents' insurance covers the damage, the Department reimburses for the deductible. Where there is no insurance, the loss/damage is not covered, or the premiums would be increased as a result of the claim, the Department may reimburse the foster parent for the amount of the loss/damage.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
At least annually, the central office of the Department of Health and Community Services reviews and adjusts foster care rates to take into account the annual cost of living. Foster parents are paid monthly by Central Office; however, one or more social workers in each regional office is

responsible for provision of foster care services for that region.

Basic Maintenance Rates

The rate paid to foster parents providing care in a regular foster home varies depending on the age of the child - different rates are paid for children in the following age groups: 0-4 years; 5-10 years; and 11 years of age and over. The rate is paid on a monthly basis and covers lodging, food, clothing replacement, personal care, transportation, babysitting, recreation/special occasions and includes the federal Children's Special Allowance.

1. Regular Maintenance Rates (paid monthly) (effective April 1, 1999)

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years +*
Food	$110.00	$133.00	$168.00
Lodging	104.00	105.00	107.00
Clothing	31.00	41.00	57.00
Personal Care	13.00	12.00	24.00
Transportation	35.00	35.00	35.00
Babysitting	45.00	45.00	45.00
Recreation/Special Occasions	25.00	30.00	35.00
Federal Children's Special Allowance	135.42	135.42	135.42
Total Monthly Rate	**$ 498.42**	**$ 536.42**	**$ 606.42**

2. Fee-for-service according to the classification of the foster family

Level 1	$0.00
Level II	$200.00

3. Therapeutic Rate (Level III)

All age category basic maintenance rate	$ 606.42
Fee for service (Level III)	516.00
Total	**$1,122.42**

4. Young Offenders (YOA) (Level III)

Lodging	$107.00
Food	168.00
Clothing and personal care	63.00
Fee-for-service (Level III)	516.00
Federal Special Allowance	135.42
Total	**$989.42**

Additional Allowable Expenses

In addition to the basic rates outlined above, foster parents receive an additional allowance for clothing and school supplies. In December, a Christmas Allowance is also provided. A one-time Basic Clothing Allowance may be provided, if required, to children coming into care.

Additional Care Costs

Spring Clothing Allowance - paid in April

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years and older*
Clothing	$ 65.00	$ 73.00	$ 104.00

School Clothing and Supply Allowance - paid in August

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years and over*
Supplies	-	$ 120.00	$ 157.00
Clothing	$ 53.00	72.00	97.00
Total	**$ 53.00**	**$ 192.00**	**$254.00**

School Supply Allowance Only - paid after August

	Kindergarten - Grade 5	*Grades 6-12*
Supplies	$120.00	$157.00

Winter Clothing Allowance - paid in October

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years and over*
Clothing	101.00	134.00	156.00

Christmas Allowance - paid in December

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years and over*
Allowance	$106.00	$113.00	$121.00

Basic Clothing Allowance - may be paid when child enters care

	0-4 years	*5-10 years*	*11 years and over*
Allowance	up to $190.00	up to $245.00	up to $310.00

Foster parents may be reimbursed for the actual costs incurred for additional items, usually with prior approval from the Department. The types of expenses covered include: health care services; recreation equipment; uniforms; graduation expenses; special lessons; school outings; camping; homemaker services; day care; kindergarten; assessment and counselling; and tutoring. Transportation to the doctor, dentist, hospital etc. may be reimbursed at the rate of 254 per kilometre.

Special Services Allowance
Children in care who have special needs are assessed on an individual basis. Up to $8.65 per day may be paid, in addition to the regular foster care rate; the actual amount paid depends on the child's needs.

Emergency Shelter
Persons providing emergency foster care receive the regular maintenance rates, plus any applicable additional amounts for clothing, recreation and school supplies (as outlined above), and $1.80 per day for children 0-10 years of age or $2.55 per day for children 11 years of age or over. Furthermore, the parents receive a flat rate (i.e., a retainer) of $23.70 per month for each bed designated for emergency care.

Holding Fee
This is a retention fee allocated in instances where the child is absent for a short time (i.e., hospitalization). The current rate is $2.00 per child per day, for up to three months.

Substitute Care Arrangements

Group homes are residential facilities owned and operated by an agency or incorporated body. They provide 24 hour care for up to six children displaying physical, intellectual, emotional or behavioural disabilities. The Department of Health and Community Services stipulates certain policies and standards concerning the operation of group homes.

The Independent Living Program assists youth in care to acquire the skills needed to live and function independently. The program, which serves youth 15 to 19 years of age, lasts one year.

Specialized treatment resources are provided by the Department to meet the needs of hard to serve children in its care. Where a child's needs cannot be met in New Brunswick, he or she may be referred to an out-of-province treatment facility.

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Information for Quebec is currently unavailable.

Introduction

Foster care services are intended to provide protection, safety, and care to children whose family of origin is unable to provide care for them for various reasons. As the preferred model of out-of-home care, foster care provides children both temporary and longer-term options for child growth, development, and safe, nurturing, and stable relationships in a familial setting.

The Province has directed resources toward the revitalization of foster care services; intended to strengthen and stabilize the existing foster care system, increase the number of foster care providers available and enhance their competencies, and improve outcomes for children in care.

The Ministry foster care revitalization strategy encompasses key components including:

- Enhanced daily rates including respite and skill enhancement provisions;
- Foster parent training;
- Provincial recruitment initiative;
- Support for regional delivery of some foster care services;
- Outcomes measurement approach for children in care

Ministry funded social services are governed by the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFSA), 1985, recently revised as *the Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Welfare Reform)*, 1999, but not yet proclaimed. Responsibility for the foster care system rests largely with the 54 Children's Aid Societies (5 of which are Aboriginal) located throughout the Province of Ontario. Children's Aid Societies (CAS) are independent, non-governmental agencies governed by Boards of Directors responsible for the staff and activities of a particular agency. The provincial legislation defines the mandate to protect children to age 16 years if they are in the society's care or supervision, or until the order expires (up to age 18 years or when the youth marries). The Society may, with the Director's approval, provide care and maintenance up to age 21 years while the child completes a post-secondary education.

The government's role in foster care consists of the overall development of long-term policy and review/coordination of the system, licensing, and funding. Each CAS is responsible for the recruitment, approval, and management of foster homes in its own jurisdiction. For the purposes of licensing, the places where children live have been divided into two separate streams; foster homes and children's residences (also known as "group homes").

Types of Foster Care

Foster Homes

A foster home is an approved home, in which parent-model care is provided to four or fewer unrelated children, under the supervision of an operator holding a current license to provide foster care services. In the child welfare sector, over half of all children in care are placed in society operated foster homes and/or group care. Foster Care is also used for open custody in the young offender system, and must adhere to the same licensing requirements as Society based placements. It is also possible for an individual/organization to be licensed by the Ministry for the purposes of recruiting/approving/managing foster homes. Often a service provider will offer this service

in affiliation with another licensed residential resource. For example, an individual who provides care through a licensed facility may wish to recruit foster homes where the philosophy of care or religious orientation is consistent with that of the facility. The foster homes managed by the licensee are considered to be "affiliated foster units".

All agency-based foster care or licensees operating affiliated foster units must develop and maintain operational policies and procedures including that related to recruiting, screening and selecting foster parents, a system for supervising foster homes, an annual evaluation system for foster homes, and an up-to-date list of approved homes. While such policies and procedures may differ between individual CASs/licensees, the Ministry has established uniform regulations and guidelines governing the management of foster homes to ensure consistency with the provincial legislation and regulations.

Provincial legislation requires that children's services be provided in a manner that respects children's need for continuity of care and stable family relationships, takes into account physical and mental developmental individual differences, and respects cultural, religious, and regional differences. Such care is considered temporary, pending achievement of a permanency plan such as returning to family, placement in the community, an adoptive family, or possibly a decision to remain in longer-term foster care.

Regular Foster Care

Regular foster care refers to the provision on a daily basis of all the essential elements of family life that a child needs. In a regular foster home, the child can quite readily be integrated into the foster family and have his/her needs met by following the family's daily routines.

Specialized Foster Care

Specialized foster care is designed to meet the needs of children with identified developmental, emotional, medical, or physical exceptionalities. The program's primary objective is to accommodate the child with a foster home setting where his/her special needs are addressed on an ongoing basis and in a manner where the child is encouraged to function to their maximum potential. It is preferable to have one foster parent providing care and supervision on a full time basis.

Treatment Foster Care

Treatment foster care is intended to provide placement for children who require community-based treatment to meet their specialized needs. The children will require individual programs developed by their foster parents and work to assist them in modifying behaviour. The program is time limited and requires foster parents who have the ability to provide programming as well as the family living experience for children. The goal is to address the treatment needs of the child and prepare them for permanent placement. The treatment needs of children require that the program utilize a mix of professional treatment staff and foster parents. It is expected that there is at least one foster parent providing care and treatment on a full-time basis.

Foster Parent Training and Approval

Currently, training for agency staff and foster parent(s) of the 54 children's aid societies is delivered by the *Ontario Child Welfare Training System* (OCWTS), established by the *Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies* (OACAS) in 1994. The OCWTS recruits trainers from local CASs whom then provide training to foster parent(s) within their local agency or geographic region. The availability and extent of training for foster parents varies across agencies in the province. Many CASs or outside placement facilities have developed their own local training for foster parent(s) in addition to or in place of that provided by OCWTS.

Training components for foster parent(s) include both "orientation/pre-service" training and "core/in-service" training. The orientation training provides foster parent applicants with information (including written material) on foster care policies and practices and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties. The core material provides training for foster parent(s) who have been processed through the approval process and may already have a child placed in their home. Referral and enrollment in a particular training module is based upon the identified needs of the foster parent and includes topics such as mental and physical health; education; alcohol and other substance abuse; early child development and legal services.

Currently, the curriculum design, delivery format and evaluation of Provincial training for foster parent(s) is under review. A revised training program to meet the needs of agency-based foster parent(s) is expected for release in the Spring of 2000.

Appeals/Complaints

A representative of the CAS/licensee must respond to any inquiries by or complaints against foster parent(s) within 24 hours, and investigate within five working days. The foster parent(s) must be informed of the investigation outcome within five days thereafter. If a child who is 12 years of age or over objects to a particular placement, the child is entitled to a review by the Residential Placement Advisory Committee.

The Ministry has established a standard outlining the considerations to be taken into account during the investigation of an allegation of abuse involving a CAS foster parent, volunteer or staff member.

Foster Parent Society of Ontario

The Foster Parent Society of Ontario (FPSO) is an incorporated, provincial non-profit organization which represents local foster parent(s) in Ontario. In order to be a member and have a voice at the FPSO level, there must be an established Foster Parent Association (FPA) which pays an annual membership fee of $15 a year per open foster home. The FPSO conference and training sessions are, however, open to non-member foster parent(s) across Ontario. Local and regional voting delegates at an annual association conference elect the executive on an annual basis.

The FPSO maintains contact with both the federal Canadian Foster Family Association and the International Foster Family Association, and has provided input on various local and provincial initiatives and representation on several committees affiliated with the OACAS, and the Ministry.

Foster Care Rates

Under the new funding framework, announced in 1998, the Ministry established a new minimum daily rate for foster care providers. This revised daily rate structure includes a higher base rate than the previously established minimum. The basic minimum rate established by the Ministry of Community and Social Services covers food and lodging for a child. It does not include extra costs of clothing, spending allowances and other specialized services that may be needed by children in foster care. Each agency may provide additional funds, at their discretion, to cover extra costs of clothing, spending allowances and other specialized services.

Foster Care Daily Operating Cost Benchmarks

Type of Care	*Daily Rate*	*Basis*
Regular	$32.20/ day *	Basic Rate - $25.71 Respite/Relief - $1.69 Skill enhancement - $4.80
Specialized	$49.76/ day	Basic Rate - $42.18 Respite/Relief – $2.77 Skill enhancement - $4.80
Treatment	$67.64/ day	Basic Rate - $58.96 Respite/Relief - $3.88 Skill enhancement - $4.80
Outside Purchased Care	$67.64/ day	

* Benchmark developed using *Federal Child Support Guidelines* equivalency scale.

The basic rate for "regular" foster care is prescribed at a minimum of $25.71 per day. The basic rates for "specialized" and "treatment" foster care, however, are not prescribed. The CASs responsible for applications of the rates have discretion in applying rates beyond that prescribed as the minimum, depending on the identified needs of the child and demonstrated skills of the foster parent(s). The new child welfare funding framework uses a series of "benchmarks" intended as "optimal averages" not intended to be applied to individual cases or situations. The Ministry has established benchmarks for foster care rates as a means of determining agency funding allocations based on "days care" provided to children. Each individual agency must then deliver services and develop their own agency operating budgets within their overall funding allocation.

The recognition for respite is built into the total daily rate structure and is at the discretion of the individual CAS. The agency can either pay the foster parent(s) an additional daily rate, and/or utilize funding to provide discretionary supports within the foster care system, as warranted by the circumstances to best meet the needs of the child in the foster home.

The recognition for skill development and experience of the foster parent(s) is built into the skill enhancement provision of the total daily rate structure. The amount of this enhancement will vary between foster parent(s) given their differences in levels of skill and experience at any one time.

Substitute Care Arrangements

Children's Residences/Group Care

Group care provides residential services and associated care and supervision for up to ten children in a parent model or staff model residence. Generally, the facilities are operated by private, incorporated, non-profit organizations. Individual CASs may also operate group homes that receive approval from the Ministry through a service contract that includes a program description and service/financial data targets and are funded as part of the overall CAS budget.

Children with social/emotional/behavioural problems have access to more sophisticated treatment programs provided by personnel such as psychiatrists, nurses and special educators. These programs may include secure treatment programs. Some group homes provide child welfare services to older children in need of protection who do not have major emotional or behavioural problems; generally, these children are on a long-term placement.

Such homes may also be used for short-term placements: as emergency homes, which accept children on a 24-hour basis to alleviate a crisis situation; as receiving homes, which accommodate children when they first come into care; or as assessment homes in which staff determine the plan of care for the child.

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Introduction

A foster home is defined in *The Child and Family Services Act* as "a home other than the home of a parent or guardian of a child, in which the child is placed by an agency for care and supervision, but not for adoption". Each mandated agency or regional office of the Department of Family Services is responsible for the development, utilization, maintenance and coordination of the foster care program within its jurisdictional boundaries.

Types of Foster Care

In recognition of the needs of children and the varying skills and abilities of foster parents, a continuum of foster care programs is utilized.

General Placement Foster Home
Approved for up to four children, these homes may provide short- or long-term care and may receive a service fee.

Emergency/Receiving Foster Home
These homes are approved for up to four children for short-term placement, pending decisions concerning the child's placement needs, and may have an assessment capacity.

Child Specific Foster Home
This type of foster home is a placement resource for a child in care where the child is known to the foster parent. It includes extended family placements.

Staffed Foster Home
Placement resource approved for up to four children where the caregiver is an employee of the agency. Includes "proctor" situations where the employee usually lives with one child and provides a set number of hours of counselling and life skills preparation to the child.

Specialized Foster Home
Approved for up to four children, these homes are usually for long-term placements where the caregiver possesses specific skills in order to deal with the special needs/problems of the children. A Specialized Foster Home receives a service fee as compensation.

Training and Approval

Following an orientation to the foster care program, interested families must undergo an approval process which includes a family assessment, a building review, a medical reference, personal references, an abuse registry check and a criminal record check. The approval process is completed within 90 days of receipt of the initial enquiry. A letter of approval is issued to the home indicating the maximum number and sex of children to be accommodated. A foster home must be approved before a child may be placed there.

Agencies are encouraged to provide initial and ongoing training to foster parents. A certificate course in foster care is offered through one of the community colleges.

Review/Evaluation

All foster homes are reviewed biannually; the home's letter of approval may be cancelled it if does not conform to departmental standards. The child's service plan contains provisions for review of his placement.

Appeals/Complaints

Complaints against a foster home may involve physical conditions, approval standards and service provided. A foster child may place a complaint or foster parents may state complaints or grievances concerning a child in their care or the service they are receiving. All complaints should be made directly to the agency concerned where they are handled through an internal review process. Complaints may also be made to the Director, the Children's Advocate, or the Ombudsman.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
A departmental standard describes the process to follow when there is an allegation of abuse made against a member of the foster family where the foster child is currently residing. The standard clarifies the roles of the various workers involved. The responsibility for the investigation, for coordinating any other agency involvement, and for bringing the case to closure is lodged with the agency that services the geographical area where the foster home is located and who issued the letter of approval. The foster family receives written confirmation of the results of an investigation and the status of the home within three weeks following the completion of the agency investigation.

Legal services through Legal Aid are available to foster families only when it is clear that a criminal investigation is underway, or criminal charges are actually laid, or when their name is to be listed on the Provincial Child Abuse Registry without a criminal conviction.

Manitoba Foster Family Association

The Manitoba Foster Family Association ceased operation in August 1993.

Damage Compensation

The Foster Parent Intentional Damage Compensation Plan is funded by the province and administered by the Child and Family Support Branch of the Department of Family Services, and the Insurance and Risk Management Branch of the Department of Finance. The plan provides coverage for intentional damage occurring in foster homes/open custody homes and includes an appeal process. It does not cover losses covered by a comprehensive homeowner's policy, or motor vehicles, aircraft, or other property for which specific coverage is written by insurers.

Foster homes are not required to have an existing home insurance policy. The plan does have limits on the coverage for specific items, and there is a $100 deductible for each claim. Claims are assessed by an adjusting firm hired by the plan.

Foster parents are covered by liability insurance if an action is brought against them by a third party as a result of a foster child's action, either under an agency's third party liability insurance policy, or under the province of Manitoba's general liability policy. They also have access to legal counsel through Legal Aid in these situations.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates

Manitoba's basic maintenance rates for foster care are authorized annually by the provincial Treasury Board. The rate includes two components: a portion paid directly to foster parents, and a portion retained by the mandated agencies (including the five regional offices of the Department of Family Services responsible for foster care) to disburse on behalf of children, based on their needs. In addition, agencies have available to them, in the form of a grant, monies to cover service fees and other special care costs.

Basic Maintenance Rates

The basic maintenance rate is intended to cover the costs identified through a Chart of Accounts; components are shown on the following page. In recognition of the increased costs of living in northern communities, rates for communities north of 53° are higher.

Per Diem Rates
(effective April 1, 1996)

	South of 53 degrees		*North of 53 degrees*	
Components	*Child 0-10 yrs*	*Child 11-17 yrs*	*Child 0-10 yrs*	*Child 11-17 yrs*
Household allowance	$0.43	$0.43	$0.45	$0.45
Bedding and linen	0.44	0.44	0.46	0.46
Repairs and equipment	0.86	0.96	0.90	1.01
Utilities	1.02	1.02	1.07	1.07
Food	5.30	6.74	5.56	7.08
Health and personal care	0.50	0.78	0.53	0.82
Transportation	1.50	1.50	1.57	1.57
Respite[1]	1.74	1.74	1.83	1.83
Replacement clothing	1.76	2.20	1.85	2.31
Personal allowance	0.64	1.47	0.67	1.54
Babysitting/child care	1.14	1.14	1.20	1.20
Damages/Deductibles	0.90	1.73	0.95	1.81
Total to Foster Parent	$16.23	$20.15	$17.04	$21.15
Agency Discretion[1]				
Gifts	0.26	0.26	0.27	0.27
Activities, education, special occasion, etc.	1.07	1.07	1.12	1.12
Agency Allowance Sub-total	$1.33	$1.33	$1.39	$1.39
Total Rate	$17.56	$21.48	$18.43	$22.54

1. Agencies are allocated a global fund for specific child-related items based on the child's needs. These discretionary items do not result in an automatic payment to foster parents.

Additional Allowable Expenses
Upon prior approval by a worker, and/or submission of the applicable bills, foster parents may receive payment for additional costs. In addition, the costs of homemaker services, transportation, and special medical items may be covered in special circumstances.

Special Rate Provisions
A service fee is provided when extra services are required to meet the high needs of the child; this is known as special rate foster care. The amount paid is determined using a point rating system based on the child's special needs.

Substitute Care Arrangements

Residential care resources include group homes and treatment centres. Group homes, which may accept between four and eight children, provide care and treatment for children, ranging predominantly from 12 to 18 year olds, whose needs cannot be adequately met in a substitute family setting. These children have usually experienced a range of abuse and/or neglect and exhibit emotional or behavioural difficulties as a result. Treatment centres provide similar services to six or more children. In addition, clinical assessment and support services are available to the residents.

Residential care placements are managed through a provincial placement desk which priorizes all referrals for residential placement. Universal per diem rates are provided on the basis of number of residents, the size of the facility and geographical location. A facility at any level may be designated as a receiving home, to be used for emergency placements. Receiving homes receive a combination of grants and per diem funding, which generally represents fixed and variable costs.

Independent living programs are available for youth 16 to 18 years of age who have demonstrated a willingness and some ability to move into independence with supports.

The Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System (YECSS) was established in 1997/98 with funds redirected from the closure of Seven Oaks Centre, a reception facility used for high-risk children. YECSS provides services on a 24 hour basis. These services include:

- Intake
- Mobile crisis capability (mobile crisis teams consisting of a clinically trained person and a youth care worker)
- Crisis stabilization units (one six bed facility for boys; one six bed unit for girls)
- Brief treatment capability for children/families at or following the crisis until the regular system can respond

- Case management function, particularly where the child/family is in crisis for a longer period of time and where the regular system is unable to meet the child/family's needs
- Home-based crises support/homemaker services.

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Introduction

A foster home is the preferred placement for a child in the care of the Minister. The regional offices of the Department of Social Services are responsible for approving foster homes and for providing financial support. Foster parents may be registered on one of the adoption waiting lists while providing fostering services.

Types of Foster Care

Saskatchewan's foster parent program includes four levels of foster care: intern, practitioner, specialist, and therapeutic. There are also emergency homes. Standards regarding support, training, case planning, and respite are being developed for the practitioner, specialist and therapeutic homes to ensure provincial program consistency.

Intern Foster Care
Intern foster families have completed pre-service training and have been approved after the home study. They can accept their first foster child but must complete the practitioner level training within two years.

Practitioner Foster Care
About 80% of foster homes are practitioner level homes. Daily care is provided to children without severe emotional or behavioural problems. A maximum of eight children, including the natural children of the foster parents, may be cared for in one home.

Specialist Foster Care
Specialist foster care may be used as a placement for children who cannot be managed in a practitioner foster home or a group home and for whom an institutional placement is inappropriate. Some children 12 years of age or older may require a period of residential (institutional) treatment but the availability of a specialist foster home shortens this period considerably.

Therapeutic Foster Care
Therapeutic foster care homes provide services to children who require intensive one-to-one support and counselling as an alternative to residential treatment. These homes operate as a cluster of homes so that they can provide respite to each other. A worker is on call 24 hours a day for the cluster. Only one child is placed in a therapeutic foster care home.

Emergency/Receiving Foster Homes
These are designated by the regional director. They must be available on a 24-hour basis and may receive up to 12 hours notice prior to a placement. A maximum of eight children, including the natural children of the foster parents, may be cared for in one home. Where designated emergency homes are not available, practitioner foster care homes may be used.

Training and Approval

The Department of Social Services has a formal mandatory foster care training program which was developed by the Department and the Saskatchewan Foster Parent Association, with the assistance

of the School of Social Sciences at Nova University, Florida. The program combines approval of foster parent applicants with pre-service and practitioner level training. Training is provided by specially trained teams made up of one caseworker and one experienced foster parent and is available across the province. Three themes are emphasized throughout the program: teamwork, dealing with separation and grief, and working with the natural family. Topics range from impact of the placement, cultural awareness, family dynamics, and behaviour management, to alcohol and drug abuse. In a two-parent home, both parents must take the training.

Persons interested in fostering are given a three hour orientation at the end of which they decide whether or not to fill out an application and proceed with a six module (24 hour) pre-service training package. While the applicants are completing the pre-service package, a home study report is done. The home study generally takes from three to four months and includes self-assessment, several interviews, reference checks, and completion of a medical report. A criminal records investigation is required. Issues discussed during the home study are varied - use of alcohol and drugs, physical and emotional problems of applicant(s), marital problems, finances, previous involvement with child protection services, disclosure of physical or sexual abuse, child management practices, fire safety standards, and housing guidelines. This home study report is shared with the applicants. Persons not suited to fostering generally select themselves out.

A foster family which is approved at the end of the pre-service training and home study becomes an intern family which is able to take its first foster child. The intern couple is then required to complete the ten module (40 hour) practitioner level of training within two years. If it is not completed in two years, the couple will not be continued as foster parents after the children in their care leave the home. Advanced training for therapeutic foster care parents is now available as well.

Review/Evaluation

An annual written review of each foster home is done by a caseworker, reviewed with the foster parents and signed by them.

Appeals/Complaints

A specific conflict resolution procedure has been established jointly by the Department and the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA).

If, when a conflict arises between foster parents and departmental staff, the foster parents are not satisfied with discussions with the caseworker, they must notify the worker who informs the supervisor. If a meeting with the supervisor is unsuccessful, the parents may request a meeting with the regional director. Regional committees composed of departmental and SFFA personnel select support persons who are trained to mediate when discussion of problems between foster parents and staff include regional directors and/or supervisors. If the problem is not resolved at the regional level, the foster parents and support person may contact the chairperson of the provincial support committee. The chairperson may refer the matter to the Executive Director of the SFFA who arranges a review. Participants include the foster parents, support person, Executive Director of SFFA, caseworker, supervisor, regional director, and Executive Director

of Family and Youth Services Division or a designate. Only five days must elapse between each step in this process.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
When a complaint of abuse or neglect is received against a foster parent, it must be investigated immediately by a caseworker. The investigation must be completed in 30 days. If there appears to be a basis for the complaint, the police are notified immediately.

Saskatchewan Foster Families Association

The Saskatchewan Foster Families Association (SFFA) works closely with the Department of Social Services to promote public recognition of fostering, to strengthen recruitment and support of foster parents, to improve care for foster children, and to deliver the orientation and training packages to new foster parents. All approved foster parents automatically become members. The association is run by a provincial board of directors and operates through 16 local associations. Each departmental regional office has a caseworker who is designated as the liaison with the local SFFA branch. The SFFA is funded through a departmental grant.

Damage Compensation

Foster parents must carry insurance on their property and possessions to be eligible for coverage under the Saskatchewan Foster Families Association's insurance rider. The rider applies when a claim is not collectible under regular insurance due to the criminal or wilful act of a foster child.

In exceptional circumstances, when a claim is not otherwise collectible, the Department may pay compensation for damage caused by children in care. The Department will also pay all or part of any deductibles, depending on the number of previous claims in a year.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Foster care rates are reviewed periodically by the Minister of Social Services and are authorized and paid through the regional offices. Basic maintenance rates are based on a 1993 independent study, "The Cost of Raising a Child in Saskatchewan". There have been cost of living adjustments since 1993.

Basic Maintenance Rates
The basic maintenance rate is paid to intern and practitioner foster care parents who provide daily care to children with a variety of needs. Intern foster parents have been approved after completing pre-service training and have one year to complete the practitioner level training. The basic maintenance rate is intended to cover food, clothing, education, personal care, transportation, household expenses, recreation and a spending allowance.

Basic Maintenance Rates
(effective April 1, 1998)

Northern Regions	*< 1 year*	*1-5 years*	*6-11 years*	*12-15 years*	*16-17 years*
Food	$152.42	$145.16	$195.81	$223.83	$261.11
Clothing	177.85	44.21	66.92	72.46	97.71
Education	6.59	6.59	13.17	13.17	13.17
Personal Care	-	11.52	10.85	31.14	40.53
Transportation	60.68	60.68	60.68	60.68	60.68
Household Operations	97.63	109.27	107.95	107.95	107.95
Recreation	-	29.45	48.36	59.65	70.63
Monthly Total	$495.17	$406.88	$503.74	$568.88	$651.78
Per Diem Rate[1]	$16.51	$13.56	$16.79	$18.96	$21.73
For youth attending university or vocational school					
Spending					$65.00/month
Personal					$35.00/month
Southern Regions					
Food	$151.60	$116.39	$152.73	$173.88	$193.31
Clothing	170.90	43.97	64.18	70.49	97.71
Education	5.49	5.49	10.98	10.98	10.98
Personal Care	-	7.60	7.30	24.98	32.39
Transportation	56.36	56.36	56.36	56.36	56.36
Household Operations	97.63	109.27	107.97	107.97	107.97
Recreation	-	29.45	48.31	59.65	70.63
Monthly Total	$481.98	$368.53	$447.83	$504.31	$569.35
Per Diem Rate[1]	$16.07	$12.28	$14.93	$16.81	$18.98
For youth attending university or vocational school					
Spending					$60.00/month
Personal					$30.00/month

1. Per diem totals have been calculated based on a 30 day month.

Note: Spending allowance is included in the categories of food, personal care and recreation. It is expected that an allowance will be given to each child for his or her own use. The following rates are provided as guidelines only. The actual rate will vary from family to family.

	1-5 years	*6-11 years*	*12-15 years*	*16 + years*
Monthly Spending Allowance Guideline Rates (North and South)	$5.00	$16.00	$30.00	$34.00

In addition to the basic maintenance rate, a Skill Development Fee of $100/month per child is paid to all approved practitioner foster parents who have completed training and are not already receiving a Fee-for-Service (see below) greater than $100/month.

Additional Allowable Expenses
Payments are also available for children with special needs, on a request basis, to cover items such as training expenses, babysitting and respite care costs. Actual costs are covered for items such as medical travel, school supplies, sports or musical equipment and clothing at the time of admission to care, as required.

Special Rate Provisions

Fee-for-Service
In addition to the basic maintenance payments, a fee for the care of children with increased needs resulting from physical or behavioural difficulties may be paid. Fees may range from $100 to $500/month.

In some cases, an Exceptional Fee may be paid for children with very extreme physical or medical conditions..

Respite
All foster families are now eligible for a basic level of respite.

Therapeutic Foster Care
Therapeutic foster care homes are used as placements for children whose needs cannot be met in a practitioner foster care home or a group home, and for whom an institutional placement is inappropriate. Therapeutic foster homes provide services to children who require intensive one-to-one support and counselling. Therapeutic parents receive advanced training. Payment is based on completion of training and years of experience. The rate covers basic maintenance, skill development fee and special needs. Respite is provided.

Therapeutic Foster Care Rates
(effective April 1, 1998)

	Per Diem
Therapeutic foster care	$40.38 to $54.32

Emergency/Receiving Home Rates
There are specific per diem rates for emergency placement homes which are paid when the child is in the home.

Emergency/Receiving Home Rates
(effective April 1, 1998)

Age	*Per Diem*
0-11 years	$28.58
(Maximum stay 15 days)	
12 years and over	$40.25
(Maximum stay 15 days)	

Substitute Care Arrangements

Non-governmental organizations operate 13 group homes which provide care to youth, generally between 14 and 16 years of age. Most homes provide care for five to six children, with programs emphasizing adult involvement and guidance. Homes are funded by the Department of Social Services on an annual contract basis.

Government-run residential facilities provide care to older children, generally 10 years of age or more. Facilities provide structured 24 hour care. Two northern community-operated residential facilities provide services for younger children. In addition, the Ranch Ehrlo Society provides private residential treatment to youth with severe behavioural problems. The Society operates eight group homes, some of which provide specialized treatment services. The facilities are funded by the Department on a per diem basis.

Independent living arrangements may be provided for youth in care 16 years of age or more.

Contact
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Introduction

Alberta's Foster Care program is based on the belief that a family unit and parent model are the most desirable for child rearing. The foster family provides a supportive, healthy atmosphere which facilitates positive functioning for the child. Foster care is viewed as supplemental care when the child's natural family is unable or unwilling to assume full responsibility for the child. Alberta Family and Social Services is responsible for placing children in foster homes best suited to their needs and for providing financial and emotional support to foster parents.

Types of Foster Care

The Foster Care Model was phased in over four years ending in March 1995. It consists of three different foster home classifications: Approved, Qualified and Advanced. Each classification reflects the qualifications and level of skills of the foster family. Any classification of foster family having the skills or ability and interest, can provide specialized foster care to a child.

Approved Foster Care
This provides care for children whose problems can be resolved with quality care and specific supports and/or who have minor disabilities. The maximum number of children per home is three.

Qualified Foster Care
This provides care for children who require both developmental care and professional resources to resolve or meet the needs of a moderate disability. The maximum number of children permitted is three.

Advanced Foster Care
This provides care for children presenting serious emotional or behavioural problems, medical conditions, physical or mental handicaps who are at risk of requiring institutional care. The maximum number of children permitted is two.

Specialized Foster Care
This provides care for children with many problems that are frequent, intense and enduring who would normally require treatment in a residential treatment or nursing facility. These include children with extreme emotional/behavioural problems, severe psychiatric problems, or who are medically fragile. A maximum of one child is allowed.

In addition to the above, the following types of foster care are still available:

Specified Foster Homes
These are homes approved for a specific child or children where a relationship already exists with the child. The home is closed when the child leaves.

Emergency Homes
Emergency homes are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide emergency care to children. Emergency homes are paid the appropriate basic maintenance and skill fees.

Training and Approval

All families applying to foster must complete the pre-service training. Once approved, all foster parents must complete the approved training program within two years. If a family wishes to move along the foster care continuum, they must complete the corresponding training. Training to provide specialized care is individualized to meet the needs of the child.

The approval process involves a Child Welfare Information System check (for past abuse or neglect), reference check, medical report, home study and a criminal record check. The home study assesses attitudes, values and potential to foster and is the deciding factor is determining an applicant's suitability. The criminal record check is conducted prior to the home study.

The screening and approval process should not extend beyond 60 days after the applicant completes pre-service training. All applicants are advised in writing of the Department's decision. Approved applicants are advised of their foster home classification, the number of beds approved and the age and sex of children approved for placement. Applicants who are refused must be advised of the reason and of their right to appeal to the internal administrative review or the Appeal Panel.

Review/Evaluation

Foster homes must be reassessed where changes have occurred in the home which may impact on foster care services provided (e.g., move, new child, etc.). Each adult living in the home must provide the results of a criminal record check every three years. All foster homes must be evaluated annually to ensure they are meeting program standards. Homes which are found to be unsatisfactory may be closed, put on a six month probationary period or suspended for up to six months. If a home is closed, the foster family must be advised in writing of the reasons for the closure.

Appeals/Complaints

Foster parents may appeal the Department's refusal to accept an application for foster care or withdrawal of approved foster home status. In addition, a foster parent who has cared for a child for six months or more may appeal a child's removal from the home. A child may appeal his placement in or removal from a foster home.

In April 1991, the Protocols and Guidelines for Resolution of Issues in Foster Care were implemented. These outline the procedures to be followed where there is a disagreement between the foster parent and social worker or the foster parent has concerns regarding a practice issue or the child's services plan.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect

A child welfare worker, child in care or other person may lodge a complaint about the services a child is receiving, or allege neglect or abuse. In all cases of alleged neglect or abuse, the Children's Advocate must be notified. Child welfare staff determine whether an investigation is needed; if one is, it is conducted by staff with no involvement in the case. Foster families who

are accused of abuse or neglect are referred to the Foster Allegation Support Team (F.A.S.T.) for support.

Alberta Foster Parent Association

The Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) is a non-profit society that was registered in 1974 to act as the collective voice and central resource for all foster parents in Alberta. The AFPA has membership throughout Alberta and represents foster parents on an individual, local, regional and provincial level. Each of the over 40 district associations is represented by one of six Regional Councils. A Regional Director from each region and three Native Regional Directors are elected each year to sit on the Provincial AFPA Board of Directors. This structure enables the AFPA to work closely with Alberta Family and Social Services at all levels throughout the province. The AFPA is a member of the Canadian Foster Family Association.

Damage Compensation

The basic maintenance rate includes an amount to cover extra household insurance. In addition, Alberta Family and Social Services provides funds to the Alberta Foster Parent Association for a rider policy to cover certain wilful damage by a foster child. This rider policy covers only those items covered by the foster parents' own policy. A foster parent who can demonstrate that every reasonable effort to obtain insurance was unsuccessful may request an ex gratia payment.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Alberta's basic maintenance rates for foster care are reviewed on an ad hoc basis by the Minister of Family and Social Services. Regional and district offices of the Department of Family and Social Services are responsible for delivering foster care services.

Basic Maintenance Rates
Basic maintenance rates are intended to cover the costs of food, personal care needs, spending money for the foster child, and household items (i.e., to cover general wear and tear) including insurance premiums, clothing and miscellaneous items (e.g., mileage for appointments or special events and gifts).

Foster Care Rates
(effective April 1, 1998)

Age	*Per Diem*
0-1 year	$13.15
2-5 years	14.70
6-8 years	16.13
9-11 years	17.02
12-15 years	19.29
16-17 years	22.06

Additional Allowance Expenses
Additional costs may be covered, with the approval of the social worker. Allowable expenses may include:

a) educational costs such as school pictures, bus passes, student union and locker fees, tutoring costs, etc.;
b) homemaker support services to foster parents in special circumstances;
c) special medical items, such as artificial limbs, prosthetic devices, hearing aids or other such items;
d) summer camp fees or other holiday expenses (up to $134.00 per child per year);
e) recreation and cultural funds.

All medical, hospital, optometric and basic dental services are also covered through the province's Health Care Insurance Plan and a Treatment Services Card is issued on behalf of the child.

Skill Fees/Special Rate Provision
The four classifications of foster care are differentiated by the foster parents' training and experience, and by the type of service provided. Children are matched with a foster home on the basis of the family's ability to meet the child's needs. Effective July 1, 1994, the skill fees have been set at the following per child per diem rates:

Approved Foster Care - $4.75
Qualified Foster Care - $10.50
Advanced Foster Care - $23.00
Specialized Foster Care - negotiated on an individual basis.

Skill fees are paid in addition to the basic maintenance rates.

Substitute Care Arrangements

Alberta's residential resources provide specialized services with professional staff. Group care provides out of family care in a community setting. Residential facilities provide a continuously supervised environment for children with multiple problems who cannot be placed in a family setting. The Supported Independent Living Program assists youth in moving towards independence. Secure treatment facilities provide the most intensive care to children who are considered to be a threat to themselves or others.

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Introduction

Foster homes provide substitute parenting in a family home for children in the charge, care, custody or guardianship of "a director" designated under Section 91 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. The goal for children in foster care is to return them to their own families, where possible. This goal may be successfully met when there is a cooperative partnership between the fostering family, the child's family and staff of the Ministry for Children and Families. Each foster home is the administrative responsibility of the regional office in whose jurisdiction it is located.

Types of Care Settings

Range of care setting options

A child in the charge, care, custody or guardianship of the director must be placed in a director-approved resource. The director chooses from two main types of directly funded residential services: family care homes and specialized residential services.

Family care homes

Family care is the out-of-home living arrangement which most closely replicates the preferred environment for a child's upbringing. Most family care homes offer interim substitute parenting to children while supporting important relationships of children to their parents and extended families.

Additional Ministry services are available to family care homes on an as-needed basis according to each child's plan of care. The type of service offered and its intensity varies according to the level of the home and the needs of the children placed.

There are five kinds of family care homes: restricted family care, regular family care, and specialized family care, Levels 1,2, and 3.

All types of family care homes may provide respite and relief services (relief services are discussed in detail later under *Relief to caregivers*). Restricted family care homes may provide respite or relief only for a child already approved to reside in that home.

Restricted family care

Restricted family care homes are director-approved families who provide care for a child known or related to them. Approval is restricted to the specific child placed in the home, and terminates when that child leaves or is discharged from care. A restricted home may be re-approved if the child previously in care at that home returns to it, or to provide respite or relief services for that child.

Regular family care

Regular family care homes are director-approved families who provide care for children of varying ages and needs. Unlike restricted family care homes, the child placed in the home is not normally known by the caregiver.

Specialized family care homes
Specialized family care homes provide care in a family setting for children placed by the director who may present moderately to extremely challenging behaviour or developmental delay. Each of the three levels of specialized family care homes has specific approval, experience, training requirements, and Level 2 and 3 homes may also provide specialized assessment and intervention services.

Specialized residential services
Specialized residential services include bed subsidy homes, group homes, staffed/specialized residential child care resources, intensive child care resources, receiving, assessment and planning programs and satellite (sub-contracted) home programs. They may be operated by a non-profit society, private agency or an individual.

Bed subsidy homes
Bed subsidy home services are contracted by the Ministry on an annual or more frequent basis with private individuals or non-profit societies. Generally, the services include only basic care and nurturing. Services are characteristically provided on a 24-hour basis, with guaranteed emergency placement for individuals or family groups.

Under exceptional circumstances, when it is clearly in the best interests of a child, a bed subsidy home may be used as a family care home.

A bed subsidy home may have capacity for between one and six children.

Group homes
Group home services are contracted on an annual or more frequent basis with private individuals (private group homes) or non-profit societies (society-operated group homes).

Generally, group home core services include 24-hour skilled parenting and child care services, a structured family model, group and individual counselling and activities, and programming for individual children designed to achieve the specific goals of the child's plan of care.

In addition to these core services, individual group homes may also offer certain specialized services such as receiving services, longer term care, or respite and relief care.

A group home may have capacity for between three and eight children.

Receiving, assessment, and planning programs
Receiving, assessment, and planning programs are residential, but may also include outreach services to a family and other community agencies involved in the family's life. Programs are usually located in the local community in order to allow easy access to the child's family and other community resources, as well as immediate response capacity for emergency placements.

Services provided are time-limited and are generally aimed at assisting the director in formulating a plan of care for the child.

Intensive child care resources (ICCRs)
ICCRs provide short-term, intensive, individualized services and programs to children with severe and profound behavioural and/or emotional disorders.

Children receiving ICCR services normally require an inter-disciplinary team approach involving the co-operative involvement of several community agencies and/or government ministries.

Staffed/specialized residential child care programs
Staffed/specialized residential care programs offer 24-hour care for children for whom a plan has been developed and specific goals have been set. Services are generally time-limited and are aimed at meeting the goals established in the individual child's plan of care. A variety of approaches may be used as long as there is a system in place for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of each child's progress. In some cases, these programs offer community-based, long-term, specialized services for children whose basic care needs are such that they require specialized care until adulthood or beyond.

Among the services in this category are wilderness/ranch programs. These are residential and, because of their remote location, may operate to a large extent as self-contained communities. Services are usually focused on learning to live co-operatively, learning social, educational, life and survival skills, and learning to cope with success and failure. All wilderness/ranch programming is time-limited. A given resource may offer several scheduled programs during the year, and the starting and finishing times of the programs may be staggered according to the needs of the individual children.

Satellite home programs
Satellite home programs offer services similar to staffed/residential programs. However, in a satellite home program the director provides the contracted caregiver with written authorization (including specific conditions) to sub-contract with other caregivers for the provision of direct services to be received by children placed in the program.

Generally, a foster home may not have more than six children, including the foster parents own children. No more than two of the six children may be under two years of age.

Training and Approval

Provided the references, criminal record check, medical report and home study are satisfactory, the district supervisor will, on the recommendation of the social worker, approve the home for placement. Where a home is found to be unsuitable, the Ministry advises the applicants in writing of its decision. The applicants have the opportunity to have the district office's decision reviewed by the regional operating officer (or designate).

Once a family care home is approved, a Family Care Home Agreement is signed by both the family care providers and the director (or designate). The agreement for Regular Family Care Homes (and level one) is renewed every three years, whereas a Restricted Family Care Home agreement is valid for one year only. Specialized Family Care Home Agreements, levels 2 and 3 are renewed every 18 months.

All foster parents must participate in a 15 hour pre-service orientation program prior to their first placement. Thereafter, the local foster parent association offers workshops to help family care providers develop their parenting skills. The director may also provide funding to individual family care providers to meet additional training needs. Major work has been completed on a standardized training program that all Regular and Level 1 homes will be required to take.

Review/Evaluation

All family care homes must be evaluated annually to ensure a high quality of care. Reviews occur within 30 days of the anniversary date of approval. Reviews include a file review and a home visit where the family care providers are interviewed.

Where a family care home has been inactive for six months or more, a review of the home must be conducted to determine if it should be kept open.

Appeals/Complaints

Disagreements between individual foster parents and social workers are dealt with by a protocol developed jointly by the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry. The protocol was revised in November 1995.

All children-in-care have specific legal rights under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*. Allegations of abuse of these rights may be taken to the Child and Family Review Board. Children-in-care also have access to the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, Office of the Ombudsman, and Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
Any allegations of child abuse in a family care home must be reported immediately to the director. The Ministry and the Federation have jointly developed a protocol for investigating such reports. It was last revised in November 1995. Copies are available on request.

British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations (BCFFPA)

This registered, non-profit association maintains a working partnership with and is funded by the Ministry for Children and Families. It develops, coordinates and implements training programs, assists foster parents through support and consultation, improves public understanding and actively recruits family care homes. The federation encourages foster parents, social workers and other interested people to work together to improve services for children. The federation consists of representatives from the local and regional foster parent associations, with regional coordinators reporting to the regional councils. The Ministry provides grants for training, newsletters, the development of local associations and other support functions. The Federation employs an executive director, education consultant and several support staff.

Insurance

The British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations has a group insurance rider for extended property damage caused by a child placed by the director. This rider is limited to the extent of the foster parents' current property damage coverage. In addition, there is a third party liability policy which covers all foster parents related to actions taken in carrying out their fostering responsibilities. The Ministry for Children and Families funds the insurance coverage through an agreement with the federation. All foster parents with a signed agreement are automatically covered; this coverage is in addition to their regular insurance policy. Where a foster child damages a foster parent's property, the social worker is be contacted immediately.

Motor vehicles used to transport children placed by the director must have at least $1 million third party legal liability coverage.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Basic maintenance and clothing rates are established and reviewed annually by the Ministry for Children and Families.

A. RESTRICTED AND REGULAR FAMILY CARE HOMES

Rates
Restricted and Regular Family Care Homes both receive the following all-inclusive payments: Basic Family Care Costs plus Additional Family Care Costs. Regular Family Care Homes also receive an additional "Acknowledgement Standard" payment which recognizes the additional skills which regular family care parents require to care for children not known to them, children of different ages and needs, and children with less background history and information than children placed in Restricted Homes.

The Basic Family Care Costs cover: food; household allowance; transportation; clothing, health, personal care, supplies for young children; and family recreational outings.

The Additional Family Care Costs cover: transportation (child-specific costs); equipment; personal allowance; in-home services; education; and gifts and activities.

The Acknowledgement Standard, paid to Regular Family Care Homes only, is in recognition of their skill level (as described above).

Family Care Rates
(effective January 1, 1996)

Restricted Family Care Homes

Age	Basic Family Care Costs monthly	Basic Family Care Costs per diem[1]	Additional Family Care Costs monthly	Additional Family Care Costs per diem[1]	Restricted Family Care Rate monthly	Restricted Family Care Rate per diem[1]
0 – 11	$379.75	$12.66	$194.56	$6.49	$574.31	$19.15
12 - 19	$474.42	$15.81	$194.56	$6.49	$668.98	$22.30

Regular Family Care Homes

Age	Basic Family Care Costs monthly	Basic Family Care Costs per diem[1]	Additional Family Care Costs monthly	Additional Family Care Costs per diem[1]	Acknowledgement Standard monthly	Acknowledgement Standard per diem[1]	Regular Family Care Rate monthly	Regular Family Care Rate per diem[1]
0 - 11	$379.75	$12.66	$194.56	$6.49	$63.46	$2.12	$637.77	$21.26
12 - 19	$474.42	$15.81	$194.56	$6.49	$63.46	$2.12	$732.44	$24.42

1. Based on a 30 day month.

Family Care Rate Breakdown

	0 - 11 years Monthly	0 - 11 years Per Diem	12 - 19 years Monthly	12 - 19 years Per Diem
Basic Family Care Costs				
Food	$105.34	$3.51	$146.18	$4.87
Housing	118.19	3.94	145.66	4.85
Transportation	51.76	1.73	61.38	2.05
Personal Needs	12.69	.42	16.02	.53
Recreation	28.51	.95	30.79	1.03
Clothing	63.26	2.11	74.39	2.48
Total Basic Family Care costs	**$379.75**	**$12.66**	**$474.42**	**$15.81**
Additional Family Care Costs				
Transportation	$39.54	$ 1.32	$ 39.54	$ 1.33
Equipment (recreation, cultural, etc.)	23.72	.80	$ 31.31	1.04
Child's allowance	21.85	.72	$ 31.73	1.06
Babysitting, Relief	58.78	1.96	$ 36.63	1.22
Gifts, activities	39.54	1.32	$ 39.54	1.32
Education	11.13	.37	$ 15.81	.52
Total Additional Family Care costs	$194.56	$ 6.49	$194.56	$ 6.49
Family Care Rate	**$574.31**	**$19.15**	**$668.98**	**$22.30**

[Plus $63.46 monthly or $2.12 per diem for Regular Family Care Home for Acknowledgement Standard].

Additional Allowable Expenses
The rate structure for Regular and Restricted Family Care is intended to be all inclusive in covering the day-to-day needs of all children in care. However, there are provisions for annual clothing payments and one-time only payments to meet exceptional or unusual costs which cannot be anticipated.

One-Time Only Payments
Amounts for one-time only expenses require Resource Supervisor authorization for up to $300 and regional operating officer (or delegate) authorization for amounts in excess of $300. A review of the family care rate is required regarding available funds not committed or expended from the family care rate.

Examples of situations which may warrant such payments are: long distance travel for recreational, cultural, medical and visiting purposes; exceptional medical requirements not covered by the Medical Services Plan or the Health Services Division; exceptional clothing needs; cost of insurance deductible; and other exceptional and unusual costs that the caregiver cannot be expected to manage.

Annual Clothing Grant Payments
This payment is provided when a child entering care or moving from one resource to another has an inadequate clothing supply.

Annual Clothing Grant Payments
Maximum Rates
(effective January 29, 1996)

Age of child	*Payment*
0-6 months	$134.00
6 months - 1 year	148.00
1 - 2 years	206.00
3 - 10 years	261.00
11 - 14 years	321.00
15 years and over	375.00

B. SPECIALIZED FAMILY CARE HOMES - LEVELS 1, 2 AND 3

Rates
The Specialized Family Care Home Rates are all-inclusive and consist of the Regular Family Care rate and a Service payment. The Regular Family Care rate provides for the child's basic needs and the Service payment covers all direct program costs of the caregiver in providing service, including relief, transportation capital/leasing costs and insurance costs. The Service payment varies according to the designated level of care and the number of children or beds in the home.

For Level 2 and 3 Homes, the Ministry may enter into a "child specific" or a "bed specific" agreement. A child specific agreement is used to purchase one bed for a specific child. A bed specific agreement is used when a home will be used on a regular basis.

Specialized Family Care Home Rates

(effective January 1, 1996)

Level 1 - for each child (maximum number of children per home is six (6), including caregiver's own children)

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$351	$637.77	$988.77	$32.96
12 - 19	$351	$732.44	$1,083.44	$36.12

Level 2 - (maximum number of beds is three (3))

(i) for each Child Specific agreement or each Bed Specific agreement for one bed

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$1,020	$637.77	$1,657.77	$55.26
12 - 19	$1,020	$732.44	$1,752.44	$58.41

(ii) for two children - Bed Specific

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$1,734	$1,275.54	$3,009.54	$50.16
12 - 19	$1,734	$1,464.88	$3,198.88	$53.31

(iii) for three children - Bed Specific

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$2,346	$1,913.31	$4,259.31	$47.33
12 - 19	$2,346	$2,197.32	$4,543.32	$50.48

1. Based on a 30 day month.

Level 3 - (maximum number of beds is two (2))

(i) for each Child Specific agreement or each Bed Specific agreement for one child

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$1,683	$637.77	$2,320.77	$77.36
12 - 19	$1,683	$732.94	$2,415.44	$80.51

(ii) for two children - Bed Specific

Age	*Service Payment*	*Family Care Rate*	*Total*	*Per Diem[1]/ Per Child*
0 - 11	$2,856	$1,275.54	$4,131.54	$68.86
12 - 19	$2,856	$1,464.88	$4,320.88	$72.01

1. Based on a 30 day month.

Relief or Respite Care

"Relief" means both in-home and out-of-home relief for the family care home. "Respite" means out-of-home care provided by the director to a child's parents with whom there is a support service agreement.

Costs for three days of relief (per child or bed) are part of the service payment component of the Specialized Family Care Home rates. The following rates are paid to the home providing the service and apply to both relief and respite care (under intermittent care agreements).

Relief/Respite Care
(Per Diem)

Level 1	$46.12
Level 2	58.41
Level 3	80.51

Additional Allowable Expenses

The Specialized Family Care Home rates are intended to be all inclusive; however, the following provisions for one-time payments exist.

One-Time Only Payments

Level 1, 2 and 3 homes are eligible for one-time only payments according to the Regular Family Care Home policy. However, supplementary relief or professional support services are assessed differently.

Professional Support Services
Where the Specialized Family Care Home is unable to meet some of a child's service requirements, the resource supervisor may authorize external supports to support the placement.

Supplementary Relief
In situations where more than three days per month relief is required to maintain a placement, and the cost would require the caregiver to spend an unreasonable or disproportionate amount of the service payment, supplementary relief may be approved for up to $300 for both in-home and out-of-home relief.

Substitute Care Arrangements
Supported independent living placements are provided to 17 and 18 year old youth in care.

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Introduction

The objective of foster care is to provide a child in care and custody with a family setting and a healthy parent role model when the child's birth family is unable to care for the child. The substitute family environment is intended to facilitate the child's development and provide a positive, learning environment for the healthy functioning of the child.

The Placement and Support Services Unit of the Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for the recruitment of foster homes, the placement of children in foster homes and the provision of financial support and counselling/support services to foster parents in Whitehorse. Regional offices develop their own foster care resources using the central office for consultation and support services.

Types of Foster Care

The types of foster care in use in the Yukon are summarized below. No foster home may have more than four children in care at any time unless the children are all siblings. No foster home may care for more than two infants under the age of 18 months including their own. All foster homes may provide short- or long-term care.

Regular Foster Home

These homes are recruited from the community. The foster parents receive the prevailing basic maintenance payment for each child in their care. Regular foster parents generally specify the sex and age of children they prefer to foster.

Relative Home

A relative foster home is approved to care only for children in the Director's care and custody who are related to the foster parent(s). Relative foster home parents receive the basic maintenance payment for each child in their care.

Restricted Foster Home

This type of foster home is approved for the placement of one specific child only, usually a relative or a neighbour. A restricted foster home is usually used when no approved foster home is available and placement of the child in the home is in the child's best interests. This home may be used only for the specific child placed, for a specific time period.

Special Rate Foster Home

This type of home is intended to provide additional care and services to a child with physical, mental or emotional special needs. The home receives a negotiated special rate over and above the regular maintenance rate for providing specific services to a particular child. The rate is specified in the Foster Home Special Rate Agreement which is signed by the foster parents, the worker and the Director. The rate is determined by a point system outlining specific services or needs.

Boarding Home

Boarding homes are intended to provide a safe residential setting and adequate food and lodging for teenagers in care. Boarding home parents are not expected to provide the same level of care and supervision as foster parents. Boarding home rates vary according to circumstances, but should not exceed the basic foster care rate.

Training and Approval

Once the completed Application for Fostering form is received, the Department initiates the approval process. This involves exploring three personal and/or community reference checks, a medical reference, a public health nurse reference, an RCMP criminal record check, an inquiry of the Child Protective Services files for all family members over 18 years of age, and completing a home study.

The home study is a vital component of the screening process. It is intended to assess the applicants' values, attitudes and potential as foster parents, including compliance with the foster home program standards. All members of the family should be interviewed at least once and also be seen as a group. The worker may recommend approval of a foster home; however, only the Supervisor of Placement and Support Services, relevant Regional Supervisor or the Assistant Director of Family and Children's Services have authority to approve a home. Once a home is approved, both the foster parents and Assistant Director sign the Foster Home Agreement which is renewed annually. Where a home is found to be unsuitable, the worker notifies the applicants in writing and advises them of their right to appeal the decision to the worker's supervisor or to the Director of Family and Children's Services.

Orientation and training are the responsibility of the Placement and Support Services Unit in Whitehorse and of the worker in the Regional Offices. Potential and approved foster parents are encouraged to attend orientation group training sessions in Whitehorse. At least one foster parent from each foster home is to complete a minimum of 2 hours of orientation and training prior to accepting their first foster child. Further essential training must be completed when it is identified as a requirement by the Department and/or foster parents. Other training is optional for approved foster parents but is encouraged. A foster parent support group has been established in Whitehorse.

Review/Evaluation

All approved foster homes must be monitored every six months, regardless of whether a child in care is in the home. An annual review, to ensure compliance with the Foster Care Standards, includes at least one home visit, completion of a health and safety checklist and discussions with all workers who have placed children in the home. A review of departmental staff services to the foster family, to ensure compliance with standards, is also completed at this time. When the foster family's circumstances change, a review must be conducted immediately. All reviews must be documented on the foster home file. Supplements to the home study are required every three years, at which time new references may be requested.

Appeals/Complaints

A foster child or a foster parent may make a complaint concerning the child's placement in or removal from a foster home; a foster parent may also state complaints concerning Departmental services a child is or should be receiving. Complaints should be made directly to the worker but may be directed to the Supervisor and appealed to the Director.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
Any reports of abuse in a foster home are investigated by a child protection worker according to standard departmental procedures. Supports to the foster home are provided by the foster family support worker.

The Association of Yukon Foster Parents

A foster parent support group, the Association of Yukon Foster Parents, was established in the fall of 1989 and became a registered non-profit society in October 1990. It provides monthly support and information meetings for foster parents. In addition, it was active in responding to the Foster Home Review Committee's request for feedback on proposed standards.

Damage Compensation

The Department of Health and Social Services does not usually cover the cost of damages caused by a child in care and custody. Foster parents are encouraged to ensure that their own household insurance provides them with adequate protection in the event of damage. Yukon foster parents are covered for extended coverage through an agreement with the British Columbia Foster Parent Insurance Plan and the Department will cover the deduction of this rider. The Director has authority to provide compensation in exceptional circumstances.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Foster care rates are established by the Department of Health and Social Services. Effective September 1991 (and retroactive to July 1991), a new rate which applies to all age groups but varies according to regional location, was introduced; prior to this time, rates varied by age and region. The Department's regional offices are responsible for managing foster care resources in their areas; payments for foster parents are made by cheque from head office (Whitehorse).

Basic Maintenance Rates
The basic rate, which varies depending on geographic location, is intended to cover the normal costs of food, transportation and personal care items. In addition, an annual allocation to cover the costs of maintaining a basic wardrobe is provided in two instalments (spring and fall). A further winter clothing allowance is issued in the fall to cover the costs of a winter jacket and boots for each foster child. Foster parents also receive, on behalf of each child in their care, a monthly allowance for personal spending, hair cuts, club fees, birthday gifts, etc.

Foster Care Rates
(Rates effective July 1, 1991)

A. Basic Maintenance

Area of Residence	*Per Diem*
Area I (Whitehorse)	$23.25
Area II (Dawson, Pelly Crossing, Mayo, Watson Lake, Faro, Ross River, Carcross, Teslin Carmacks, Haines Junction)	26.76
Area III (Old Crow)	49.70

B. Clothing Allowance

Age of Child	*Basic Annual Allowance*[1]	*Winter Clothing Allowance*
0-23 months	$320.00	$ 40.00
2-5 years	358.00	65.00
6-12 years	556.00	95.00
13-18 years	637.00	130.00

C. Child's Allowance

per month/per child	$135.00

1. This Allowance is paid in two instalments - one in the spring and one in the fall.

Additional Allowable Expenses

In addition to the basic rates, foster parents may also receive the following:

i) *allowances for school supplies* - paid once a year for foster children enrolled in school. The amount payable is $70.00 per child in grades one to seven and $90.00 per child in grades eight to 12.

ii) *dental treatment* - up to $100.00 per child per visit. Payments exceeding this amount must receive supervisory approval.

iii) *orthodontic treatments* - up to $2,000.00 per child, on prior approval by the supervisor only. Amounts exceeding this must receive advance approval from the Director.

iv) *glass frames* - $100.00 per child. Payments exceeding this amount must receive prior supervisory approval or be covered by the child's allowance.

v) *Christmas allowance* - birth to four years receive $40.00, five to eleven years receive $60.00 and 12 to 18 years receive $90.00.

vi) *respite care services* - approved on a special need basis.

vii) *day care services* - approved on a special need basis.

viii) *extra transportation costs* - approved on a special need basis.

ix) *holiday allowance* – provided once per year if travel for the holiday is outside the Yukon.

Special Rate Provisions
Parents caring for a child who has physical, mental or emotional special needs receive a special rate in addition to the basic maintenance and other amounts outlined above. The amount is calculated by the social worker, using a point rating system, based on the child's special needs and the extra services required to meet these needs. Special rates are authorized for a maximum period of six months, and reviewed at the end of that period.

Other Substitute Care Arrangements

The Department of Health and Social Services contracts for residential child care services in facilities provided by the Department. One of the Department owned facilities has eight beds and cares for teens who exhibit behavioural or emotional problems. One group home is contracted for 3 beds and is designed for youth who are cognitively low functioning and have serious behavioural problems. A third group home is contracted for 4 beds and provides a therapeutic program for youth who are sex offenders and are cognitively impaired.

There is one receiving and assessment residential program. It provides short term and emergency placements on a 24-hour basis for children at risk and in the care of the Director. The maximum capacity is 14 children, of either gender, from 0 to 18 years of age. Children under 2 years are placed, whenever possible, in a foster home within 24 hours. The receiving home also provides an additional bed for stabilization purposes and supervised visiting services. The Department provides the facility but contracts privately for the services.

There is one 6 bed residential treatment program. This program provides treatment services for youth with severe behavioural or emotional problems. It is a Government staffed and operated service.

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Introduction

The foster care program in the Northwest Territories provides homes for children who come into the care of the Superintendent of Child Welfare, either temporarily or permanently, and for children who have been apprehended and are waiting for a court hearing concerning the need for a wardship order. The objective of foster care placement is to give children a role model of good parents and a good experience of family life. The type of placement ranges from infant and short-term placements to long-term placement of older children.

The program is administered by the local offices of the Department of Health and Social Services. Homes are approved by child welfare workers and supervisors on behalf of the Superintendent; placements are done by workers.

The foster parents are part of the team which is involved with the child and they are sometimes involved in case conferences regarding the child's progress.

Types of Foster Care

Most of the foster homes in the Northwest Territories are regular and special need homes which provide varying degrees of service. There are also emergency or drop-in homes in some communities. Provisional homes may be approved in certain circumstances.

These are all described below.

Regular Foster Homes
Foster homes are approved to care for up to four children, unless all the children are members of one family. In such a case, more than four may be allowed. Some of the children have special needs related to physical care, management problems or contacts with natural family; the care provided by the foster parents varies accordingly.

Provisional Foster Homes
The home of a relative or neighbour may be opened as a provisional foster home on an emergency basis for a specific child. The home is subject to a shorter approval process by a worker and supervisor. The home may be approved when no appropriate foster home is available or when the worker and supervisor feel it is in the child's best interests. The home is closed when the child for whom it was opened leaves. If the foster family wants to continue fostering, all procedures not completed during the provisional approval process must be completed. Some of these homes may be free foster homes which do not receive a per diem.

Emergency/Drop-In Foster Homes
Emergency or drop-in foster homes are available in some communities. The use of these homes is reviewed annually to determine if the need still exists. Emergency homes must be available 24 hours a day to accept two or more children. A home study is required before placement of any children in an emergency foster home.

Training and Approval

Before a home study can be done, the application must be reviewed by the area office and the references and consent to release of medical information must have been received. Before the family is approved by the worker and supervisor, a consent for release of criminal history must also be submitted.

The home study allows the worker to find out how the family operates and what each member's attitudes are. It also is a chance to further describe what is expected of foster parents and to help the applicants make a final decision about fostering. Issues which are addressed include emotional maturity and stability of the applicants, attitudes towards children, flexibility in child rearing, the parents' expected relationship with the Department and biological family of the child, finances, status and location of the house, and presence of firearms. If an applicant is a family unit, each family member must be interviewed sometime during the home study and at least one interview should be held with the whole family.

The screening and approval process should not take longer than 60 working days. If a home is rejected, it can be reassessed if certain changes occur, e.g., major renovations or a change in the number of people living in the home.

When a foster family is approved, a foster home agreement is drawn up as a contract between the Department and the foster parents. The agreement outlines expectations of the Department and foster parents. It is recommended that the foster parents also sign a Declaration of Confidentiality when the contract is signed.

If a medical emergency arises, and the foster parent cannot contact the worker, the foster parent is to take the same action as he/she would with his/her own child.

The Department in conjunction with Foster Family Associations, provides training to foster parents.

Review/Evaluation

All foster homes are to be evaluated annually. This review allows the worker to ensure that the quality of care remains high and to discuss with the foster parents any concerns which they may have about fostering.

Appeals/Complaints

A foster parent with a problem or concern is to first contact the worker. If the worker is unavailable, or the contact is unsatisfactory, the parent is to contact the worker's supervisor. The highest level of contact is the Superintendent of Child Welfare who will make the final decision concerning the problem.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect
Any allegation of suspected abuse or neglect by foster parents is dealt with in the same way as such an allegation in a biological family. Investigations are conducted by child welfare or community workers in conjunction with the RCMP.

Yellowknife Foster Parent Association

The Yellowknife Foster Parent Association was founded in 1977 to allow foster parents to get together to share problems, frustrations and successes and to present a more effective voice when communicating with other organizations. The Association helps to make the Department aware of the need for training, particularly in specialized areas such as behaviour management, child abuse, and working with children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. It also serves as a source of new information on foster care methods and trends. The Association is mainly funded by the Department of Social Services through grants. Since the Yellowknife Foster Family Association started, two other Associations have been formed, the South Slave Foster Family Association and the DeCho Foster Family Association.

Damage Compensation

The foster parent is not responsible for damages caused by the child in a foster home or in the community unless the child has acted on specific directions from the parent. The child welfare worker should be contacted to discuss possible compensation.

Foster Care Rates

Establishment of Rates
Foster care rates are established by the Headquarters component of the Department of Health and Social Services. The front line services are delivered by local workers in the community offices.

Basic Maintenance Rates
A regular maintenance rate is paid for children who require only basic care and maintenance. It is intended to cover expenses for food, clothing replacement (over a 12-month period), personal care items, spending money, household costs and miscellaneous items.

The per diem maintenance rates have been developed in relation to the Social Assistance food allowance scales. Under this methodology, settlements in the Northwest Territories are grouped into ten groups or "scales", with higher allowances payable in the more remote settlements. Outlined below are sample rates for communities in Scales I, VI, and X.

Sample
Basic Foster Care Rates
(effective August 1, 1992)

Scale	*Per Diem*	*Examples of locations*
Scale I	$24	Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Hay River
Scale VI	$37	Norman Wells, Rankin Inlet, Iqaluit, Resolute Bay
Scale X	$47	Pelly Bay, Spence Bay

In addition to the maintenance rate, a monthly clothing allowance is paid for each child; a discretionary seasonal payment is also available. An initial clothing allowance (to cover complete summer and winter wear) is provided in addition to the monthly allowance if the child is placed without enough clothing.

Clothing Allowances
(effective January 1, 1987)

monthly allowance	$ 35
annual discretionary allowance	up to $330

Additional Allowable Expenses
Other expenses may be reimbursed, generally with prior approval and submission of receipts; each case is considered on an individual request basis. Examples of items which may be covered are education and recreation expenses, the cost of child care equipment and travel expenses.

Certain health and medical expenses, not covered by Territorial health insurance, are also covered by the Department. These include expenses for ambulances, drugs, dental care, eye care (examinations, lenses and frames) and special items such as limb braces and hearing aids.

Special Rate Provisions

Availability Rate
The availability rate is a monthly retainer paid to all emergency/drop-in foster homes. The rate as of October 1988 is $200 per month. In addition, the basic foster care rate is paid to foster parents for each day of emergency or drop-in care provided.

Special Foster Care Rates
Foster parents caring for children with special needs are compensated for the additional time and effort required at a per diem rate that is higher than the rate paid for basic foster care. The special rates have levels which are rated minimum, medium and maximum, in one of three categories of special care – physical, child management and "other". Other relates to time spent with the family and community to assist the child with integration.

Community Social Workers undertake an assessment process to determine which level of special rate is applicable in each child's case. Once the assessment has been completed the special rate is determined by adding the appropriate amount from the chart below to the Basic Maintenance Rate as determined from the community scale in the previous section.

Special Foster Care Rates
(effective December 1996)

	Minimum (7 hours/ month)	*Medium (14 hours/ month)*	*Maximum (24 hours/ month)*
A. Physical Care	$13	$22	$42
B. Child Management	20	39	58
C. Other	5	14	24

Substitute Care Arrangements

Group homes are designed to provide a normal home-like environment for children in care for whom placement in a foster home is inappropriate. Handicap group homes provide services to children with special needs who are in long-term care. There are two group homes for the handicapped, one in Iqaluit and one in Rankin Inlet. Funding is on an annual contract basis.

Group homes provide consistent structure, discipline, instruction and emotional support for the children to help them return to a more open community living arrangement. Most group homes have a receiving function because they may have to admit children on an emergency short-term basis when no other resource is available.

The residential treatment centre, Trailcross, provides specialized programs for children with emotional or behavioural problems or learning disabilities. Programs are geared towards long-term special placement.

Youth between the ages of 16 and 19 may be placed in an independent living arrangement.
The Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife is funded on a contract basis to provide long-term treatment services. The Treatment Centre and Trailcross admit children from across the Territories.

When there are no resources in the Territories for a child with special needs, a placement may be made in a southern residential facility. A contract is drawn up for each placement.

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